

# News & Views

# 85 · AUTUMN 2022

## We are called!

Editorial from our new Chair of Trustees, Revd Anthony Buckley



**Revd Anthony Buckley**

Vicar of St Michael at the North Gate, City Rector, Area Dean of Oxford

*In The Lord of Rings, Tolkien has Elrond say: 'That is the purpose for which you are called hither. Called, I say, though I have not called you to me, strangers from distant lands. You have come and are here met, in this very nick of time, by chance as it may seem. Yet it is not so. Believe rather that it is so ordered that we, who sit here, and none others, must now find counsel for the peril for the world.'*

Who has done the calling if not Elrond? It is a crucial moment in the book; there is a bigger power at work, and Elrond knows that this encouragement is what the members of the fledgling fellowship need to hear. They are not there by chance...

It is a great privilege to be involved in education, and even more humbling to be assured that we are not there by accident. We have been called. *I will build my church*

says Jesus – this is *his* church, and a vital part of the life of the church is Christian service in schools.

It was very good to be present at the TISCA conference in June, welcoming Chaplains, Teachers, Governors, Headteachers and Trustees (old and new), honouring the excellent continuing work of General Secretary Alastair and Development Officer Alix, deeply grateful for the faithful and wise service of Robert Court, our previous Chairman. We were stimulated by thoughtful and thought-provoking words, and united in our sense of calling.

It is not always easy to be a Christian in a school, and teaching is itself a stressful as well as rewarding task. Perhaps we can remember the words of Mordecai to Esther: *Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?* We may not always feel royal as we mark another set of scripts, attempt another



At St David's College, Llandudno



At London Christian School



With ACSI Europe, South Asia and USA leaders

# Coming up in this edition

- Chaplains
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- Parents
- Staff
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- Pupils
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## We are called!

continued

tricky assembly, chair a difficult meeting or listen to a sad pastoral issue, but in the eyes of the angels we are so (after all, Peter describes us as a royal priesthood). We are the ones who have been called to teach, lead and influence – We are here *for such a time as this*.

By the grace of God we are called to *find counsel* for young people as they journey through *the peril of this world*.

As we face the new academic year, may we be as excited as much as we are challenged, energised as much as we are nervous. May God give us grace, courage, strength and wisdom, to serve as best we can in the communities to which we are currently called. May we be prayerful for one another in TISCA as we seek God's leading and blessing for all that lies ahead. And if ever a prayer, a sounding board, a cup of coffee (or all three) are needed, don't hesitate to be in contact.

Yours in Christ, Revd Anthony Buckley



At Thames Christian School



At Mill Hill School, London

## TISCA Communications

- www.tisca.org.uk** Updated regularly and includes job vacancies (let us have these), events, news
- 07702 950730** TISCA phone number
- gensec@tisca.org.uk**  
We send out regular updates, resources, forms, etc. – let us have your email address if you are happy to be kept in contact this way
- Chaplains' WhatsApp group**  
Now has over 45 members: sharing news, prayer requests, events, speakers, resources and a weekly 'thought'. If you'd like to join, please contact Alastair or Alix. One chaplain comments about the group: *I'm LOVING it. Genuinely delighted to be part of it. It is so helpful. Thanks for sorting it all out.*
- Heads' WhatsApp group**  
Has over 20 members. Details from Alastair or Alix
- Governors' WhatsApp group**  
Launched this year. Details from Alastair or Alix
- @tisca\_uk** Follow us on Twitter
- /tiscauk** Follow us on Facebook
- TISCA The Independent Schools Christian Alliance**  
Follow us on LinkedIn
- Support Us**  
Through [smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1047025-0](https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1047025-0)
- Comments and feedback** on publications, events, our platforms welcomed



TISCA Trustees (photo taken at the Annual Conference, 2022)

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### Previous General Secretaries

- Ken Barnes (1995–1998)
- Revd Michael Hepworth (1998–2002)
- Mark Greenstock (2002–2006)
- Hugh Bradby (2006–2019)

## TISCA news

### Chaplains

- **Revd Tim Mullins, Stowe School**, has died after a long illness. He and his wife, Lucy, wrote an article of 'reflections' in the last TNV. We offer our condolences to the family, friends and Stowe School.
- **Revd Dale Sutcliffe, West Buckland School**, has moved on after several years' service
- **Revd Antony Wilson, Mill Hill**, has moved back to his native Ipswich
- **Revd Andy Cranston returns to Oswestry School** after a year in parish/school work
- **Revd Rachel Hill-Brown** appointed Chaplain at Solihull School

### Heads

- **Revd Nick Seward, Kingham Hill School**, steps down after 14 years service
- **Nick Pietrek, Thorpe House**, moves to Stafford Grammar School
- **Charles Fillingham, Francis Holland Regent's Park**, moves to Solihull School
- **Peter Middleton, Oswestry**, took up the Headship after being Deputy Head

TISCA Chaplains at their residential conference, Malvern Hills



### Staff

- **Joy Townsend** returns after 20 years' service in India to be Deputy Head at King's, Harpenden

### Schools

- We are delighted to welcome into new membership **Heritage School**, Cambridge, and **Treverton School**, South Africa (see separate news article)

### Christian organisations

- **ACT** (Association of Christian Teachers) has re-branded and launched a new website
- **CCE** (Centre for Chaplaincy in Education) is undergoing some changes and we thank Maggie Everett for her partnership over the past three years



In March 2022, TISCA and ACT (Association of Christian Teachers), once again combined to offer an in-person conference in Westminster on the theme, 'Renewing our identity in Christ: a Biblical response to the issues of identity in education'. Speakers included Nigel McQuoid, an ACT Trustee, Stuart Parker and Simon Byrne of the True Freedom Trust and Anna Putt of Keswick Ministries. What follows is a summary of the opening address by Dr Dave Benson of LICC and then the closing one from Steve Beegoo of Christian Concern. There are then some reflections from amongst the 70 or so attendees in person and online.

# 'A Biblical Response to Issues of Identity in Education'

For the full address from this year's TISCA/ACT conference, see [bit.ly/LICC-identityissues](https://bit.ly/LICC-identityissues)

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters



## Dr Dave Benson

Culture and Discipleship Director at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity ([licc.org.uk](https://licc.org.uk))

*Who am I? Who are we?* Probe these succinct questions, and things get complex real quick!

Is the 'real me' my self-identification? Where I live? What I do? The family I'm part of? My gender or ethnic background? Am I constituted by my church, country, or cosmic origin? These are all identities, whether received, constructed, or even imagined.

Defining oneself is front and centre in this cultural moment. Many people in the (post)modern world resemble Narcissus, satisfied to drown in one's own reflection, answering 'who am I?' without reference to community or Creator. We owe it to ourselves to express our unique, uniform-free self, apart from the crowd.

But times are changing. Individualistic pride has morphed into identity politics. Our particular and embattled 'tribe' – whether defined by class, gender, sexuality, or race – demands dignity and respect. We resent other groups who possess more privilege than we. Factions polarise, and we flame the haters to free the oppressed. We protest for total freedom from every external authority, including our biology, to be what we want to be, and do what we want to do.

Now, before we damn this wilful pride, can we agree that horrible abuses have happened? Whatever the politics, black lives do matter, women shouldn't have to cry #metoo, and LGBTQ+ students should feel safe wherever they go. God hears, and amplifies the cries of the oppressed. We should too.

But the collective fall-out from a dissolution of the 'common' good and fragmentation of self and society into ever smaller groupings of 'lived experience' characterised by marginalization is confusing to our students, our colleagues, and our curricula and colleges.

How, then, to respond? How does 'identity' sit within a biblical worldview? And how might we be wise peacemakers (Matthew 10:16) in a polarizing world, starting in our schools? We desperately need a better story. For as philosopher Jamie Smith says, 'identity is our name for being found by a story that someone else told'. In God's epic story we discover our true selves in an age of expressive individualism and identity politics. In this is true *liberation*, and *security*, at the same time. For our restless hearts and fractured selves find their home in Christ.



### Forming Wise Peacemakers | Four Lenses

CREATION	FALL	REDEMPTION	RESTORATION
purpose	problem	response	hope
Shalom Formed	Shalom Deformed	Shalom Reformed	Shalom Transformed
How do God's purposes illuminate 'identity'?	What went wrong, & how has God's purpose been distorted?	How does God's grace save the world & call us to respond in love?	Where is hope found & what would restoration look like?

More biblical than a psychological and inward looking 'identity' is the theme of the *image* of God. Looking at *image* through the four lenses of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration, what do we see? And how does it shape us to represent God in the world of education today? Space only permits a sketch...

In *creation*, we discover our collective purpose to work for shalom – holistic flourishing in right relationship with God, neighbour, nature, and self. Our selves are first received, and only secondarily constructed, with the purpose of glorifying God and better serving our reason for being: holistic flourishing. We image our triune God – a loving union-in-difference – by partnering well together in community. So, *teachers*, you are God's child before you are teacher-of-the-year trying to prove your worth. Respect our limitations, practise sabbath, and let's work in the Spirit rather than going it alone.

In the *fall*, shalom is defaced, and we experience the problem of the crooked self. When we build a name for ourselves above or against what God graciously provides, Babel begins, and all collapses under the weight of injustice. In *curriculum*, this happens when secondary identities – slices of the whole, like gender, sex, or race – become the primary filter we see life through. These cynical theories cultivate hatred rather than nurturing love, leaving our students prisoners to a static and piecemeal identity. We're called to deconstruct these partial tales and better name what it means to be human as created beings, even while fully recognising harm done to each group.

In *redemption*, we see how the faithful Israelite, Jesus, reforms shalom and resurrects the self. But in our *schools*, this cannot mean forming a Christian

clique apart from a pride-full world, asserting our right to discriminate. Rather, Jesus would have our colleges become communities set apart as a conduit to bless the world, and work for the common good. We accept students where they're at, never imposing salvation, but serving our differently identifying neighbours. It's less an 'identity in Christ' and more being baptised in *Christ*, where every secondary identity is organized rather than erased by our Saviour.

Finally, in *restoration*, we see the transfigured self – a foretaste of when Christ is the centre of life together, and all is made new. For our *students*, this means we're called to cultivate gratitude for what's true, good, and beautiful in the now-but-not-yet – in a culture awaiting transformation of partial selves into fully-formed image bearers. Where do you see foretastes of eternity in the students you teach and assessments they submit? Let's call out what's best and celebrate passions, gifts, and even healthy aspects amidst the ashes of identity politics, out of which new creation will flower. May we be surprised by hope that nothing, and no-one, is beyond liberation.

Put together, then, we discover in the biblical story an *integrated identity* – where grace restores rather than replaces our constructed identities. This created but now crooked self is being resurrected and will one day be transfigured, lovingly located in a web of relationships with God, neighbour, nature, and oneself, that truly sing. May we be the advance chorus of this good to come, our colleges and collective ethos circling Christ's throne singing, 'holy, holy, holy', reflecting the loving unity-in-diversity of our maker, Father-Son-Spirit.

# 'It's all about you, Jesus' – or, is it?

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters



**Alastair Reid**  
General Secretary of TISCA

Most of us are familiar with Matt Redman's song and will have sung about 'coming back to the heart of worship...and it's all about You, It's all about You, Jesus'. But is it? Perhaps it's really all about me?



**Mel Lacy**, Executive Director of 'Growing Young Disciples', addressed an evening TISCA meeting in May 2022 on the subject of EI – Expressive Individualism – and challenged us to consider not only how to reach out to non-Christians in

today's 'me generation' but also how to reach the 'almost Christian' young people in our circles.

Tim Keller has explained EI thus: 'Identity comes through self-expression, through discovering one's most authentic desires and being free to be one's authentic self'. We see this self-expression in the songs of Adele ('Being Loved') and Zayne Malik ('Be true to yourself') as well as in the work of businessmen such as Steve Jobs ('Follow your heart'). Worryingly, too, we can see echoes of this approach in the way school inspections hone in on 'the pupil voice' rather than on the foundational school ethos and in how some schools seem to be pushing children to explore their gender and identity quite separate from what parents may think.

Mel Lacy helped us see that EI is ahistorical, geographically untethered and can lead to a complete disregard for authority and the wisdom of older generations and of institutions such as the church. As

with many such movements there are elements of truth: witness Greta Thunberg's agitation over the climate and environment. However, all too often EI is causing 'generation z' to be neglectful of the local community (having more in common online across the world than with immediate family and locality). Community is coming to be acceptable only if it allows me to be fully my 'true self'. Bodies are 'flesh suits' and people become increasingly self-serving rather than sacrificial.

More worrying still, is the impact EI has on young Christians. As the Christian writer, James K.A. Smith ('You are what you love', 'Desiring the Kingdom') has described it, religion becomes a 'pick and mix' selection as young people take from it what they like best and discard the rest. Hence the term, 'almost Christian'. So, what to do? Mel commended the writings of Alan Noble ('Disruptive Witness' and 'You are not your own') who has reminded us that the heart can be very corrupt and that 'the quest for the authentic self can cause great harm'. We need to commend fine role models for all generations, to listen carefully to questions from young people who often yearn for examples of 'lived out faith' rather than simply taking our word for it that the Bible is historically authentic and Christ is transformative. Moreover, as Mel Lacy concluded, we should not be afraid of taking a close look at today's 'idols' (in the media, sport, industry – and also in thinking and in teaching) and then show them to be insufficient in the face of the One who died for us and lives in us today. Let's be all the more faithful in prayer – and to 'battle in the heavenlies', wearing the full armour which God supplies. It really is, 'all about You, Jesus'.

## Expressive Individualism

".....the way we think about being selves in the present day and expressive individualism particularly refers to the idea that in order to be fulfilled, in order to be an authentic person, in order to be genuinely me I need to be able to express outwardly or perform publicly that which I feel I am inside."  
Carl Trueman

"Expressive individualism is the idea that each of us finds our own meaning by giving expression to our own feelings and desires."  
Carl Trueman

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### Be True To Yourself

Life is funny. Things change, people change, but you will always be you, so stay true to yourself and never sacrifice who you are for anyone.  
Zayne Malik

### Follow Your Heart

Follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.  
Steve Jobs

### You Do You

There ain't no mystery to my mastery  
I just let myself act naturally  
Whatever I dream may not be easy to achieve  
But I still believe in equality, so  
You do you and I'll do me  
Jason Mraz

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# Queer Theory and The Classroom

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**Steve Beegoo**  
Head of Education at Christian Concern and CEO of the Christian Schools' Trust

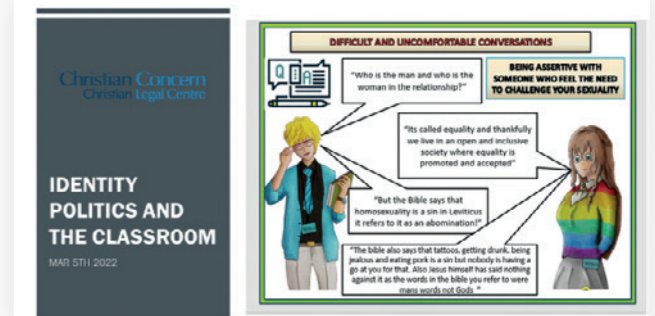
Queer Theory is having a huge influence on the thinking of our youth and the teaching in our schools and universities.

What is it? Queer Theory flows from a 'no-objective-reality' postmodernism. Are you lost yet? Or have you seen how even biological facts are not even seen as real by some any more? Queer Theory is also strongly influenced by an 'all-power-systems-are-unjust' Marxism. Any clearer? Perhaps you have seen how so much talk nowadays just assumes that certain groups (especially white cis Christian heterosexual males) must undoubtedly be seeking to control and oppress other groups?

Queer Theory leads to the belief that all traditional so called 'normal' categories and meanings of sex, gender or 'normal' sexuality are by nature oppressive, and so, therefore, must be the Christian and biblical worldview from which these 'normal' beliefs have come to us. The efforts of those who have been shaped by Queer Theory, whether they recognise this or not, are aimed at liberating the next generation from these boundaries. The father-mother family is itself seen as oppressive and in need of 'queering', to subvert and overcome the oppression. Christian marriage is seen as a religious or social construct, rather than a natural or God-given structure for flourishing family life.

The very language we use, is believed to oppress, and so must also be subverted. It is believed that as there is no objective reality, reality is created by language, and so the language must also be queered to create a new reality. This leads to biological language (eg. 'she') needing to be overcome through introducing a vast array of gender ideology based terms. The thinking goes that reality comes from the language you choose to use about yourself, not from what has been 'assigned' to you by any unwoke oppressive authority such as midwives, parents, teachers or religious leaders. Those who are woke, are those to be trusted, as they are awake to the issues and are allies in the cause of liberation from oppression.

This is outworked in efforts to, for example: 'smash



heteronormativity' (as one organisation has school staff chanting as part of their training); allow boys who may feel they have a girl's brain or girly feelings to use the girl's changing room; teach children and young people how to push back against outdated religious beliefs based in religious texts. We see new examples of this at Christian Concern weekly in independent and state schools.

It is clear that there has been unfair treatment of some same-sex attracted and gender dysphoric young people. Bullying and unkindness should not be tolerated wherever it persists. But Queer Theory does not offer the answer. It does not offer the truth about identity and how we are designed to use our bodies. Neither does it offer reasonable or fair methods to address issues that do exist. As Christians we need to maintain confidence in biblical truth and to wrestle with how to communicate Christ sensitively but clearly in our 21st century classrooms.

Creation, fall, redemption and recreation, properly taught and understood, will show our children that there is an eternal story of truth which helps us to understand ourselves and provide an authority about our real identity and purpose. This does not come from within us. It comes from God. There is objective reality to be found in Him.

(These issues are being addressed at events and resources from Christian Concern which can be accessed at christianconcern.com, and also at the Christian Schools' Trust teacher's residential conference with Professor Stuart Burgess, Friday 17th to Sunday 19th February 2023)

# Reflections on the TISCA/ACT Keynote Conference 2022 from some of our attendees

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 **Jason Fletcher**  
Head of Heritage School, Cambridge

Dr Dave Benson brought his apologetic background and contemporary art images together into an engaging talk about the Biblical response to issues of identity in education.

Using the arc of the biblical story of creation, fall, redemption and restoration as 'The Story' in which we can all find ourselves and our purpose, he helped us re-imagine education as a journey to *shalom*. Nigel McQuoid then talked to us about how practically we might embed a Christian identity into the life of our schools.

The True Freedom Trust presentation took us sensitively through some case studies, helping us understand how to approach confused young people with warmth and wisdom, with finely tuned listening and unthreatening questioning.

Anna Putt encouraged us to take stock as we try and manage the many different 'hats' we wear – as teachers, school leaders, parents, members of churches, etc. – and find an appropriate balance between work and rest. She encouraged us to trust God as we juggle many roles and to rest in our identity in Christ.

Steve Beegoo in his role as Head of Education at Christian Concern talked through identity politics and queer theory and how those concepts are entering classrooms today, particularly through popular RSE resources. He contrasted this with Biblical perspectives and encouraged us to respond with grace and truth in our particular circumstances. Christian Concern has resources that can help us in this task.

 **Revd Richard Horner**  
Chaplain at Rugby School

From this day of focus on our Christian identity, one theme came out strongly for me: our primary identity is as God's image-bearer in the world.

We all want to be the main character in our own story – our true calling is to find our place in the story Jesus tells. As St Augustine said: "Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you." Or, as Dave Benson from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity put it: "You are God's child before you are Teacher of the Year."

 **Robert Court**  
former Head of Birkdale School and out-going Chair of TISCA trustees

The first address in our conference on "Renewing our Identity in Christ" included a slide telling us somewhat challengingly to, "Stop Finding our Identity in Christ".

The Bible talks a lot not about identity but about image – formed, deformed, reformed and to be transformed. But should we break the tradition of the centuries and talk about identity in Christ? Yes, we should. We are children of God.

 **Revd Antony Wilson**  
Chaplain at Mill Hill School

The highlight of the day for me was Dave Benson's talk – *Renewing Our Identity in Christ*.

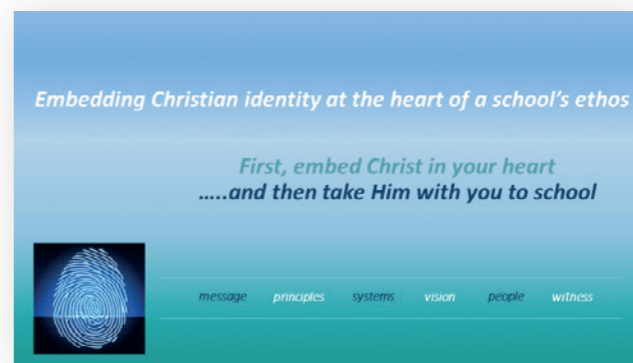
It certainly made me think a lot about who I am, and where I get my identity from, especially as I'm working with colleagues and pupils of whom the majority would write none if asked to give their religious affiliation. As the 'professional' Christian in this context there have certainly been moments when I have felt uncomfortable. So it was great to be taken back into the writings of Leslie Newbiggen, who observed such huge changes in Britain, returning from India in the 1970s after 30 years of missionary work in Britain. Newbiggen asks – *what is the real story of which my life is a part?*

 **Paul Houghton**  
CEO of Kingdom Bank and Chair of Governors at Birkdale School

*Renewing Our identity in Christ* was a great conference.

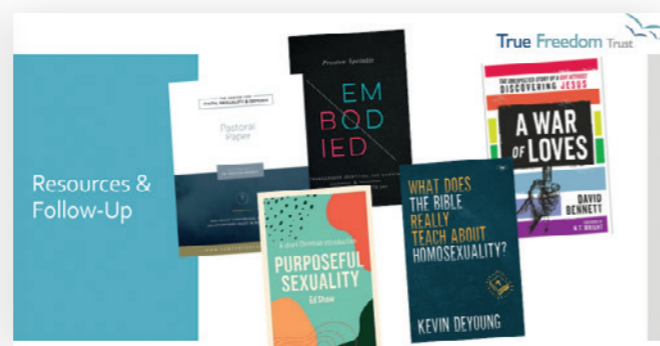
As well as meeting a number of old and new friends, it was a great encouragement to press on with 'thinking Christianly' about my role as a Chair of Governors. There were many useful themes raised, but I'd probably highlight two points that have stuck with me from the day:

- First, amongst many helpful points in setting out a Biblical response to issues of identity, we were reminded that the constructed identities our world builds will always be unable to bear the weight of what people seek to put on them. More than that, we need to see self-referential thinking for the pride it is: wrongly naming reality is rebellion against the one who created the order of our world, and replacing him is idolatry.
- Second, a speaker helpfully reminded us that 'lots of the stories we hear are kingdom stories but without the king'. A little like the apostle Paul in Athens, let's engage positively with the culture around us, building relational bridges on common ground, and then boldly and graciously fill into the picture what our culture has neglected in leaving out Jesus. If I may steal the title of Glynn Harrison's excellent book, that results in *A Better Story*, because it's a true story rather than a warping of the reality of God's design.



 **Philip Goggins**  
retired Bedford School teacher

As a teacher well into my retirement, I was not sure that the conference was going to be appropriate for me. However, I need not have worried: all five speakers gave me something of value to think about. One thing that stood out for me was a description of how identity politics has developed from the false premise of post-modernism, that all truth is relative. I have never been happy with the vocabulary that allows that something can be "true for me" but not "true for you".



# With me?

## TISCA Heads' meeting at Cranleigh School

Chaplains Heads



**Alastair Reid**  
TISCA General Secretary

A number of TISCA Heads met at Cranleigh School in May 2022 and were warmly welcomed by Martin Reader, the Head, and Jacob Harrison, the Chaplain.

We met in the chapel which had been wonderfully refreshed for the school's 150th anniversary and this enabled Martin, who shared with us, to draw our attention to plaques, the stunning war memorial and various mottoes on the walls, doors and windows.

School mottoes became something of an interesting theme for us as Martin challenged us to consider how Christian Heads can best articulate the difference between espousing Christian values (which many more secular schools would also focus on) and helping people actually know Jesus. Often a school's motto became the means of articulating the institution's ethos and values but not all are helpful. Cranleigh's mid-Victorian motto, 'ex cultu robur' ('from culture comes strength') has not proved easy to relate to and so there has been a move to 'Christianise' it by focusing on three values: thinking, being and giving – all of which have more everyday emphases but which can also be used to point pupils, staff and parents to Jesus and how He demonstrated the way to best live.

Some schools have more clearly Christian mottoes



Margaret White - Sandpiper Consulting

such as Canford's, 'unless the Lord build the house', Radley's 'wise as serpents...' and Monkton's, 'Thy word is truth' but few are as direct as King's Rochester, 'learn or leave!' Martin drew our attention to the brand new glass doors of the Cranleigh chapel which bear the words of Jesus recorded in Mark 10, 'Not to be served, but to serve', and this is becoming more of a fresh statement of intent for the school today and a means to be more evidently Christian in approach.

Schools in the 21st century face many secular pressures unheard of in Victorian times and so all the more reason for them to know what their values are and, for Christian Heads, all the greater reason to articulate a Christian vision, albeit in a gracious, gentle and winsome way. Martin's key verse for us was from Luke 23 where Jesus says to the thief on the cross, 'Today you will be **with me** in paradise'. Many well-known Bible passages, such as Joshua 1:9 ('...the Lord your God will be **with you wherever you go**') relate to community and belonging. Our part as Christian Heads is to do all we can to help our communities understand Jesus' offer to be 'with me', 'with us' and 'for us' – inclusive, loving and caring communities where Jesus is at the centre.



Cranleigh School - Heads gather

# Looking after our teachers: how well do we care?

Heads Governors



**Margaret White**  
Consultant, Sandpiper Consulting

It's September 1st, and the start of a new academic year.

The SLT meets to discuss priorities for the year ahead: there's a specific academic focus as usual, and a particular pastoral priority, alongside a sustainability initiative and restructure of parents' evenings. 'What about the staff?' someone ventures. 'Should we be doing something?' Nods of assent ripple round the table, but a challenge hangs in the air: what exactly do staff want? What would really make a difference?

This scenario is probably familiar to many senior leaders within TISCA schools. There's acknowledgement of the unprecedented pressure staff have been under for the past three academic years – and that they'll be addressing the ongoing impact of the pandemic on their pupils for the foreseeable future. There's a great desire to support staff in the best possible way, so that their working life is as positive and effective as possible. The question is, how to do this.

Sandpiper partners with schools to help them find out what is working well for staff and how things could be even better. Through a bespoke online staff survey, rigorous analysis of data and in-depth conversations with the leadership and staff, Sandpiper helps a school to formulate a realistic and sustainable roadmap in its culture of care, with targeted 'quick wins', specific longer-term areas of focus and plenty of practical, relevant action points.

Genuine care of teachers lies in the detail of daily school life, from well-organised duty rotas to the sensitive communication of change. Teachers flourish in a truly caring environment, carrying energy and positivity into the classroom and beyond. Prioritising a culture of care for staff is not only part of our Christian calling, and a moral obligation: it enables our pupils to thrive in their learning, is recognised by parents, and fosters success for our schools.



Sandpiper is a small independent consultancy set up by Margaret White to support schools in developing their culture of care for staff. Margaret is a member of TISCA and prior to forming

Sandpiper she worked as a prep school deputy head in Cambridge. Her hope is that as Sandpiper helps schools to develop a strong culture of care for their staff, both they and the young people they educate will flourish.

Margaret is always happy to talk to schools interested in partnering with Sandpiper, and can be contacted at [margaretwhite@sandpiperconsulting.org](mailto:margaretwhite@sandpiperconsulting.org)

# TISCA Annual Conference, Westminster

## Tuesday 14th June 2022

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters



**Alastair Reid**  
TISCA general secretary

It was a deep joy to meet again in person (with an online facility, too) for our Annual Conference, hosted at the Emmanuel Centre in Westminster. Our theme was, *'Inspiring faithfulness, not fretfulness'*, and we were treated to engaging presentations, warm fellowship, great food and excellent resource displays.

**Revd Anthony Buckley**, newly appointed TISCA Chair, greeted us all and heartily thanked outgoing Chair, Robert Court, for his many years of service with the Charity. There were some 65 persons in attendance with a further 15 online and we are grateful to Margaret White and *'Sandpiper Consulting'*, our sponsor, for enabling some 6 graduate teachers to attend at a specially reduced rate. We were also delighted that a Christian MP, Andrew Lewer, the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for independent schools addressed the conference briefly and encouraged us all to let him have 'good news stories' from our sector.



(left) Margaret White of 'Sandpiper Consulting', sponsor  
(right) Andrew Lewer, MP, Chair of the APPG for independent schools



**Revd Alice Monaghan**, Chaplain at Westonbirt (and a newly appointed TISCA Trustee), led us into the day with a devotion focused on Paul's conversion and the

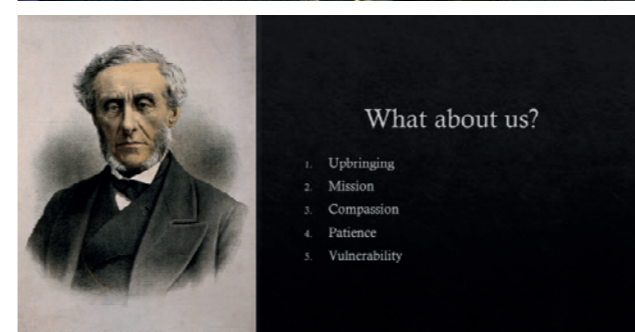
transforming power of Jesus' light. The image which Alice referred to of light shining through the 'cracked pots' of our lives, was to become a recurring theme for the day. We took a few moments to be quiet, to collect a candle as an act of remembering the Light, and then to sing *'Dear Lord and Father of mankind'*, accompanied on the keyboard by Andy Hutchison, Chaplain at Monkton (and also a TISCA Trustee).

**John Moule**, Warden of Radley College, reflected on lessons learned by a Head during the pandemic. He enabled us to consider Elijah, another 'cracked pot' through whom light shone. In focusing on 1 Kings 19: 1-19, John helped us to understand that whilst Elijah, as he faced persecution, was clearly not in control, he did nonetheless turn to the One who is and, against all odds, was prepared to be sent back to work to complete the task God had assigned to him! John Moule then asked five questions of us in relation to post-pandemic days: *firstly*, are we relational enough in how we teach and in our approach to pupils, staff and parents – or are we simply driven by process, product and outcome? *Secondly*, are we sacrificial? Schools are all about children but have we been the moaners or have we been going the extra mile? *Thirdly*, have we been distinctive? Have our colleagues seen us respond differently in the pandemic? Are we offering Hope? *Fourthly*, are we like pilgrims, trusting in God for our provision and stepping lightly on the road ahead, or do we simply look petrified like everyone else? *Finally*, do we do education with joy? Elijah may not be happy with his lot but he has joy! In Philippians 4 we are called to 'rejoice in the Lord – ALWAYS'!



John Moule

Matt Wainwright



In the presentation by **Matt Wainwright**, author of historical fiction for young people, we were encouraged to be people of compassion. Matt's focus, taken from his story of Victorian London, *'Out of the Smoke'*, was the life of Anthony Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, a fellow brother in Christ. Shaftesbury's humanitarian and Godly work was carried out in the face of the Industrial Revolution and its particularly grim impact on working children. We considered the Earl's *upbringing* – miserable but lightened by the light of Jesus shining through his nursemaid – and then his mission: *'...the advancement of His ever blessed name, and, in the temporal and eternal welfare of all mankind'*. Once again, *compassion* came to the fore as did *patience* and *vulnerability*. In each of these five areas, Matt challenged us: how are we using the privileges of our upbringing (and especially of coming to know Jesus)? Do we have a sense of mission? How deep is our compassion or are we simply doing our 'day job'? Without God we are powerless and so are we patient in waiting for Him to work? Finally, do we allow ourselves to be vulnerable? As Matt reminded us, we have the means, the motive and the opportunity to bring others to Jesus: let's not give up in this task just as Shaftesbury, despite incredible opposition, kept reforming to the very end of his life. Someone else through whom God's light shone 'through the cracks'.

Our final speaker of the day, Christian author **Dr Rebecca McLoughlin**, joined us via Zoom from the USA. Her presentation was uncompromising in calling us to be courageous as Christians of conviction in this post-pandemic world. Rebecca called on us to reclaim lost ground in areas where we need to be compassionate, sensitive and understanding – but uncompromisingly courageous in our faith: in *diversity* (most Christians in the world today are increasingly neither white nor western); in *universities* where academics are once again having to reckon with Jesus (and we should be encouraged by the growing numbers of Christian professors); in *morality* where, despite what the US declaration of independence implies, our rights are not self-evident but actually from Christ; and we need to *reclaim sexuality*, to fight back against the 1960s sexual revolution, to proclaim a story of God's love, to retain unashamedly our confidence in Christian marriage of one man and one woman (which, after all was counter-cultural in the 1st century, too) and to welcome all in humility, in grace and in repentance.



Revd Alice Monaghan

The conference day concluded with **Dr Dave Benson** of the LICC chairing a panel of our speakers. He also encouraged us to be more confident in proclaiming our faith in Christ and reminding us that no matter how chipped and cracked were our 'pots', we can still allow Christ's light to shine through us winsomely.



Dr Dave Benson and panel

# Having Christian Conversations with your Children

Parents Staff



**Simon Heather**

Youth Minister at St Nicholas Church, Sevenoaks

Sometimes when I have a task to complete, I'm happy to chip away at it little-by-little over a period of days or weeks. But there are other times, especially when the task is daunting (for me that's usually anything on an Excel spreadsheet!), where I tend to leave it and leave it - and then I'm forced to try and complete the whole task in one sitting, often rushed, and with little success.

I confess I sometimes slip in to parenting this way too. Conversations with my children about Christ and about Christian living can be put on hold - only to need a kind of "cramming session" at a later date. This rarely goes well though. None of us can take in too much in one sitting, especially young ones. Much better to let the name of Christ gently flow through our daily conversations. This is the kind of pattern in Deuteronomy chapter 6: "these commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up..." I guess today we might say: "Talk about them when you sit in the garden, when you drive to the beach, when you're

heading to bed, and over breakfast..."

This will be a particular challenge to those with children at busy independent schools or boarding schools when time with children is limited. However, the long holidays give us a great opportunity to speak gently but often about the Lord Jesus, right from the start. Picking kids up from school, phone calls at the end of the day, family Whatsapp chats can also keep you chatting to children even in the busyness of term time. A little can go a long way.

Speaking in this kind of constant "drip-drip" way we demonstrate to the children how Christ is always at the centre of our daily lives, never far from our minds, and as essential to us as the air that we breathe. This is easier said than done and we need to ask for God's help, as well as confessing to him that he isn't always right in the centre of our own thoughts. But as he enables us more and more to live and speak in this way, then we will be able to gently guide our children towards the Christ who we love and serve and we can pray that those very conversations with our children change us too - reminding us as well as our children about the greatness and the beauty of Christ.

# All run, but only one gets the prize – will it be your child?

Parents Staff



**Tracy Williams**

Editor of testingtruth.com

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When I was a child at school, I did not get pushed into sports by my parents. I did enjoy sports, but, somehow I was never really gifted at excelling in them. I couldn't understand why the other girls were so talented and why my body was not designed to excel in these things.

## It takes hard work to be skilled

I had a group of friends who were particularly good at sports, swimming and hockey to be exact. I would enjoy doing the try-outs with them, but, they would always get chosen to go on trips and to special tournaments where they would come back with victorious stories of how they scored nail-biting goals against other schools. I could only sit on the side-line and be a spectator as they would represent our school. As they moved on to high school, the skill they had developed carried them through to take on other schools at higher levels. An opportunity would even be there for them to represent our country and get a medal of gold if they should wish to take hold of it with both hands.

As I got older and looked back on those days, I realised that while I was sleeping in the mornings before school, they were already awake training and developing their muscles for swimming. While I was playing around watching videos on the weekend, they were training and growing muscles and skill for hockey. I came to the realisation that when you mould your body into a swimming or hockey machine, that has the muscles in the right places and the skill developed in your brain to hit that ball in the right place - you will undoubtedly excel in the sport. I had every chance that they had, but the difference is that their parents decided in their hearts that they were going to create, train and mould a swimming or hockey machine. The children were willing candidates, of course, and they did genuinely enjoy the sports. I still wish that I had put more effort into training for those sports when I was young.

## Physical training vs spiritual training

Why did my parents neglect to push me in these areas of sports? Well, they were busy running their businesses and trying to make ends meet. You see, I was a surprise last child in their old age and put unexpected pressure on them to get another child through life. They had to create resources to raise this little surprise - of which I am truly grateful. But there is something else that they did for me. While these talented girls were practicing sports on the weekend, I was being taken to Sunday school. While they were going to tournaments, I was watching my parents run their business and make godly decisions even if it hurt them. While their parents were focusing on creating in them a love for sport, my parents were creating in me a love for God and instilling prayer in my life "For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." 1 Tim 4:8. I had a personal relationship with God from a young age and no better gift could my parents have given me than to show me where to go to save my soul for eternity. It is this relationship root that made me come back to God at the age of twenty-four when I strayed from Him for many years. Sports are great but the danger comes in when they overtake spiritual training.

## All the runners run, but only one gets the prize

The bible speaks about our faith as a race "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone



who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." 1 Cor 9:24-25. All these girls had a faith in Jesus, as we went to a Christian school, but, now they are sitting on the race track and I am trying to help them stand up and get running again to finish the race. Our household was not the most 'sold out for Jesus' household at all, but, even the foundation my siblings and I all received has made a huge difference in the lives of my family members and the growth in their faith decades later.

### Helping your children to win the race

When you see your child, see a seed of faith that needs nurturing, see a soul that needs to win the race of faith and obtain that crown. Enter them into strict spiritual training from a young age and one day they may become strong enough to represent their heavenly country, the Kingdom of Heaven. Grow that little seed of faith into a young tree with deep roots.

- Teach them about apologetics so that those roots can grow deep and wide to keep them stable when they go out into the real world, university or college.

- Teach them to question and to research, "...Test all things; hold fast what is good..." 1 The 5:21, so that they know what they believe, why they believe it and are not plucked up out of the soil.
- Show them the other beliefs and all the pitfalls that they may come across.
- Help them to develop a strong personal relationship with their heavenly Father so their roots can grow deep and find water when the heat of the day comes because the heat will come.
- Give them a bible and show them how to navigate it.
- Instil in them a love for the victorious stories of King David, Gideon, Esther
- and ignite that spark in them to want to be used by God and to help His Kingdom grow.

You may be thinking that you yourself are unsure on things such as apologetics or how to navigate your bible and this is where the iron sharpens the iron. How are you running the race of faith – are you running so that you can grasp hold of that crown?

TISCA has partnered with ACT (Association of Christian Teachers) in recent years through running events together, sharing resources and joining together our respective trustees for prayer. ACT has recently re-branded and set up an online community. See below...

## The Association of Christian Teachers Join us as we start a new chapter!

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters

From nursery teachers to university lecturers, TAs to governors, we seek to help individual Christian educators live boldly for Christ, lead effectively in their professional lives, and thrive in their places of education.

As part of a refreshed vision to 'connect, resource and influence', ACT is keen to grow and develop its community amongst educators, in the maintained AND private sector. The particular challenges of being a Christian and a teacher span both spheres, and can sometimes seem insurmountable. At ACT, we seek to give Christians in education the tools they need to be effective ambassadors for Christ, to thrive professionally and spiritually, and to 'stay the course' in a profession that has many challenges – as well as blessings, of course!

We're so pleased to be able to continue to work with our friends at TISCA, and value them as partners in the gospel. And that's why we want to help TISCA communities by inviting individual staff to be ACT members too – and to benefit from our new online community platform.

As a Member, you'll join a growing network of Christian educators in the UK and beyond who are passionate about living for Christ as they lead in the classroom. Through our **online Community platform**, you'll be able to connect with others, share tips and ideas, and talk about the latest news and developments.

Want to learn more? Discover how we can support you by visiting Association of Christian Teachers ([christian-teachers.org.uk](http://christian-teachers.org.uk)).



# ON EAGLES' WINGS

Friday 17th – Sunday 19th February 2023  
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**GUEST SPEAKER:** Stuart Burgess has taught engineering science at Bristol University and Cambridge University. He has worked for the European Space Agency, was a lead bicycle designer for Team GB and has received many design awards. He has been an invited speaker in over 25 countries, speaking on education, christian worldview, apologetics, creation and engineering.

For more information visit:  
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Chaplains within 'TISCA schools' wear many 'hats' over and above what might be expected. They are classroom teachers, sports' coaches, pastoral carers for pupils and staff (and occasionally governors and parents, too). Many will have roles relating to Senior Leadership and also with respect to school charities. We asked one of our Chaplains, a speaker at a recent TISCA residential conference, to give his reflections on the changing face of chaplaincy in schools.

## School Chaplaincy today – time for a fresh perspective?

### A shepherd and a servant – a School Chaplain reflects

Chaplains



**Revd Tim Buckler**  
Chaplain of Dulwich College

My own chaplaincy experiences nudge me to see that the traditional model of school chaplaincy – was there ever such a thing? – reflected the nature of our historical British Christian society.

It seems logical to me that when, 'back in the day', our society spoke the message of Christian faith as well as Christian values, Chaplaincy was a means of supporting this already accepted faith tradition and world view. As society changes, so too must Chaplaincy. Many an hour I have pondered the question: as a chaplain, how can I ensure my own spiritual integrity in an ever changing 21st century society?

Mission statements and communal visions agreed by Governors and relayed and modelled by the Head will be unique to each school, or groups of schools, depending on the nature of each foundation. The understanding and expression of ideas of 'spirituality' as part of that model will, therefore, also differ.

Acknowledging that there are the two elements of a chaplain's work, namely: the mission to the populous and the mission to the individual, as school Chaplains, many – if not most – of us will seldom spend our days engaging in deep and intense Christian counselling,

prayer and support. This aspect of our ministry might be more occasional. And perhaps because of this there is an increasing desire to work out how we can be relevant to all, not just to those who share – or have an interest in – the Christian faith. Most of us will have added responsibilities – often including teaching, and leading other key whole school elements such as charitable initiatives and community service engagements - but even for those schools with a more explicit Christian ethos, the pursuit of relevance lies at our core. Jesus was in his community being relevant and relational. We, too, find that the relational aspect of our Chaplaincy is fundamental to our work. We are called to be salt and light, trusting that the Spirit of God is present in our relational moments.

It is this presence of the Holy Spirit that has become such an encouragement to me. My own engagement with my school community has begun to place a prayerful emphasis on an active engagement with the universally shared existential questions of life – our individual and communal meaning and purpose. Of course, for these conversations to occur in a meaningful manner, those I am with must dare to trust me and for this to be possible, I must be known. I am called to be known: a shepherd and servant, deeply immersed in my



Dulwich College, London



community so that, over time, others might have the courage to share their own stories with me, and, by the grace of God, I might be a signpost to the One who is the source of life.

And this is where faith comes in. I am learning to trust the heavenly process. I am not always in a position to share Christ explicitly through my words, but I can through my life, and I can encourage and support those questions that relate to meaning and purpose. As pilgrims on this journey of life we all seek fulfilment, deep down fulfilment: that which is real. We have a sixth sense – our spiritual sense, perhaps – which rings the bell of concern and whispers to reveal that which is not ultimately fulfilling. We yearn for life to make sense. As trust builds, I can reflect on the perspectives of those I serve and so can help others formulate their own questions – their deep down, perhaps not previously understood or expressed questions – and, whilst always being available, can then pray and trust that the Source of Life will follow on in a way that I cannot.

As humans, we long for that which truly makes sense. Whilst we aren't (or can't) always be honest about who we are or where we are at, we consciously

or subconsciously yearn for space and trusted support so that the jumbled confusion of our own realities and attempts at dealing with this confusion can begin to find expression. Asking right questions must be an essential prerequisite to engaging with right answers.

I have been struck recently with the way that Jesus often shared his parables. To the multitudes, He didn't always give the interpretation but rather trusted that people have their own quiet moments where they do reflect; they consider and wonder; they filter that which they have heard and seen through their own experiences. To the ones that had ears to hear, the truth that Christ shared rang true with their own experiences, even if following through with this wasn't easy. Jesus didn't seem to rush to give interpretations but allowed the questions to do their own work. The Holy Spirit imbued process of time draws forth growth.

I'm continually reflecting on how I can imitate Christ in this way: to be known and trusted so that I can be there for others as they to formulate and express their own questions about meaning, purpose and identity and so be drawn, through the goodness of God, to Christ as the source of all life.

## Book Reviews for young people

Parents

Staff

Pupils



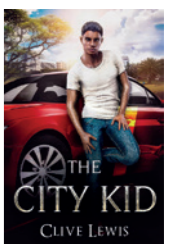
**Revd George Beverly**  
Chaplain, History and Philosophy teacher at King's Bruton

I haven't read much Christian fiction since my youth when the C S Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* reigned supreme.

However, I would say that J M Evans' *Revenge of the Flying Carpet* is in the same league as Lewis. Flying on a magic carpet, twins Paul and Trinity have lots of mini adventures. Along the way, they powerfully and beautifully grapple with the riches of God's grace and consider how important their human relationships, image, and ability to forgive others are. Working as a school chaplain, I could easily see this being enjoyed by and helpful to teenagers exploring the Christian faith alongside those seeking to live for Christ. Indeed, *Revenge of the Flying Carpet* "hits the nail on the head" when it comes to the challenges 21st century teenagers face.

Being a teenager in 2022 isn't easy – the pressures to conform, succeed, and impress constantly pull at you from multiple directions. As a School Chaplain I see this

every day. In Clive Lewis' *The City Kid*, John Ouma knows those pressures. John thinks he has discovered an amazing life in the city that promises, success, satisfaction, money, and ultimately the dream life. However, unfortunate circumstances mean that John's world comes crashing down; he's left grappling with one of the biggest questions: what's the point of life? John wonderfully finds the answer is found in Jesus Christ. The path that eighteen-year-old John treads in this novel is one that countless teenagers walk today. I wholeheartedly commend it as a book to be given to any teenager, especially those in schools where the subconscious message seems to be "life is all about succeeding and winning."



Whilst there are only 29,000 non-British pupils at ISC schools (that's 5% of the total pupil number), we are aware that increasingly British boarding schools are offering a home to pupils from Overseas, some of whom are coming from war-torn and troubled areas such as the Ukraine. Here is a reflection with 'tips' from one of our Foundation Schools - Dean Close School, Cheltenham

TISCA has partnered with several Christian organisations involved with sport over the years - such as Christians in Sport (CIS) and Kick London. Here we hear from another, Project Touchline, seeking to bring the Gospel to young people through PE lessons and sport

# Celebrating our international pupils

- Chaplains
- Heads
- Parents
- Staff
- Governors
- Pupils
- Supporters



**Rachael Vest**  
Assistant Head (International)  
at Dean Close School



**Emma Taylor**  
Warden of the Dean Close  
Foundation and a TISCA trustee

International Students at Dean Close come from a wide range of different countries around the world; currently we host pupils of 28 different nationalities and they represent around 25% of our pupils at the senior school.

Over the years we have worked hard to improve the way in which we welcome them and help them to adjust to life in a UK boarding school. Their previous experience varies considerably, of course, but for many this is the first time they have been away from home for an extended period, and there is a great deal to adjust to; the climate, the food, linguistic and cultural differences all present challenges and the first few weeks can be particularly exhausting for them.

We have a comprehensive induction programme for our international pupils before the start of the Michaelmas Term, under the leadership of our Assistant Head (International) Mrs Rachael Vest. The programme includes a treasure hunt around the campus to help pupils find their way around, sports, team-building and adventure activities, introductions to academic subjects, routines and expectations, vital access to IT service to enable pupils to stay in touch with friends and families at home, and social activities with Houseparents and with the Chaplain. By the time term is fully under way, our international pupils have a head start in making

friends and feeling at home in the environment.

Once the school year is underway we don't lose track of the specific needs of our international pupils. Each year we have a dedicated team of Sixth Form (Year 12 & 13) pupils whose role is to support our international pupils and promote intercultural inclusivity across the School. These students work with our Houses to ensure that the international voice is heard and to contribute to the warm sense of community we want all Dean Close pupils to experience.

A specific reason to choose Dean Close for many is the Christian ethos of the school, the range of voluntary Christian activities and the support of the Chaplaincy team. Feedback on the Christian life of the school is fascinating; most pupils coming from overseas find our chapel services rather more formal than they are used to; they are bemused by the need to stand up at the beginning and end of services and the hymns and songs are initially unfamiliar. After a time, though, they come to love congregational practice, in particular, with its rousing community singing. Most of all they enjoy the Hub, the school Christian Union, with its more relaxed style of worship, and the house bible studies and one to one conversations with members of the Chaplaincy team.

Our international pupils greatly enrich our school community; we aim to improve our welcome every year.



# Pioneering Christian spirituality in the child first, values second and sport third - Project Touchline

- Staff
- Pupils



**Chris Andrews**  
Director of Project Touchline, Reader/Licensed Lay Minister in the Diocese of Gloucester and Archbishops' Evangelist in the Church of England

## Where did faith, sports and values education begin?

Sport has been practised since antiquity. It brings good health enabling children and adults to confront the challenges of life including faith. The connection between faith, sports and values was brought together through Dr Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School and a man of resilient character and deep faith. In 1828, Arnold described his educational aims as being the cure of souls first, moral development second, and intellectual development third. These priorities were reinforced by playing football. According to legend, William Webb Ellis, a pupil of Rugby School, was the first player to run with the ball, thereby starting the game of rugby. (Webb Ellis would go on to become a priest in the Church of England.) Baron de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, visited Rugby School in 1886, as he considered Dr Arnold to be 'the father of organised sport'. Coubertin went on to define the modern Olympics by 'Citius, Altius, Fortius' ('Faster, Higher, Stronger'), but at the same time he used Arnold's model of 'gentlemanly conduct'. This combination underpins the rulebooks of all sporting governing bodies to this very day.

## Transforming spirituality, values and sport together

I have just returned from Cornwall from a three-day mission with The Archbishop of Canterbury where through the sport I ministered to children, adults, teachers. I planted a lunchtime prayer club in one school. Fifteen minutes where children choose to develop their spirituality and take ownership of their prayer life outside of formal collective worship. A place to sit, be still, listen, pray, rejoice, release, reach out and meet God. Twenty children attended. Forty prayer clubs have been planted with hundreds of children praying each day all through sport and worship.

Project Touchline works nationally in seventy church schools. Project Touchline teaches the Christian value/s alongside sport, so the children learn how to put the value into practice on the sports field. They learn about Jesus through Bible stories and prayer and find a practical application in the sport, changing their behaviour and faith in response to enacting the value during the games. If you want to find out more, contact me [www.touchline.org.uk](http://www.touchline.org.uk)



*Chris Andrew, is Director of Project Touchline, Reader/Licensed Lay Minister in the Diocese of Gloucester and Archbishops' Evangelist in the Church of England. His pioneering work in the teaching of faith and values through delivering sport during PE lessons in Church of England schools has transformed the way children learn what the values mean in real life through sport, as well as a deeper understanding of the Christian faith.*

TISCA has been collating information about schools which offer GTA and post-school Gap year placements. Both the TISCA General Secretary and the Development Officer benefited from spending post-school Gap years in schools (and trust the schools they served benefited, too!). Here a current GTA, who has served in a TISCA Foundation school, commends this experience.

# Graduate Teaching Assistants — no two days are the same!

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters



**Vicky Howell**  
Monkton Combe School GTA

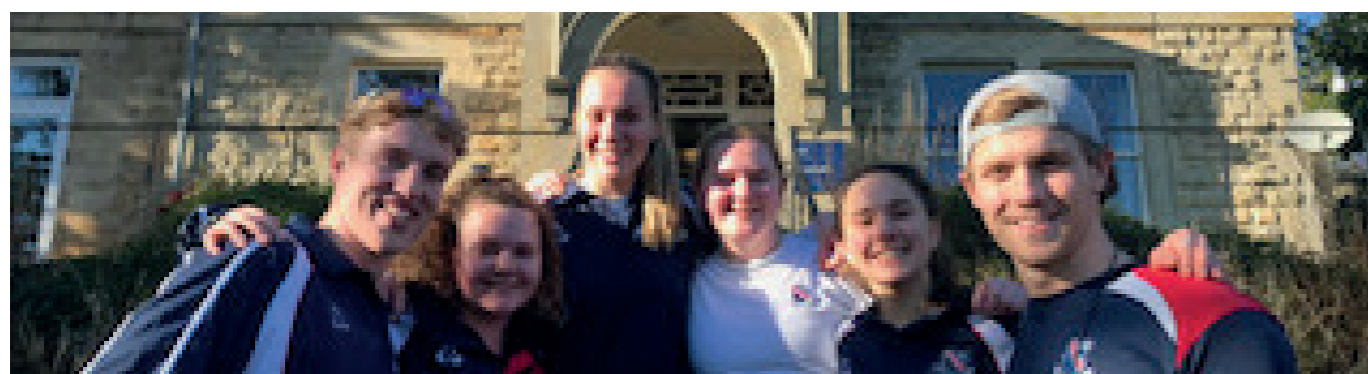
For the past two years I have worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) at Monkton Combe Senior School, a co-ed boarding school situated just outside Bath. My favourite thing about being a GTA is that no two days are the same!

In the mornings GTAs are part of the team to cover lessons for absent teachers, this offers a unique insight into classroom teaching along with the academic side of school life. In the afternoons we take to the sports field, coaching teams of all ages and abilities in a variety of sports. I was lucky enough to be head coach of the U14 girls' hockey team who made it to the National Schools Hockey Finals held in Nottingham. In the evenings we were involved in each boarding house, completing bed duties and helping with boarders' activities, this is a great time in the day to interact with the pupils in a much more relaxed setting, play silly games and get to know the pupils further.

The school, pupils and the GTAs themselves all benefit from the arrangement. The pupils benefit from

having staff members who are closer in age to them to offer guidance and enthusiasm in abundance. I found that throughout my time at Monkton I grew in confidence in my own ability in working with children, along with developing my leadership and communication skills. I've been lucky enough to go on multiple school trips as a staff member such as Thorpe Park, multiple trips to London, up Pen Y Fan and climbing Helvellyn via the edges! In every role you are supported by a qualified member of staff who offers advice and guidance on how you can improve when coaching or teaching. In term time you are provided free meals and accommodation which you share with other young teaching staff or GTAs.

I would recommend this role or similar to anyone who is considering a career in working with children or anyone who would like to work in a fun and busy environment. It is the ideal steppingstone between university and the professional world. Following my two years working as a GTA, I will be completing my teacher training in PE whilst working at Monkton through a School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) starting in September.



Monkton Combe School GTAs, 2021-22 – having just done a charity run for 24 hours, running one mile every hour on the hour!

Trinity Christian School in Reading (a CST and an ISA school) has just appointed a new Headteacher, Pearl Linkens, who started at Easter. After a long career in state primary schools, we asked Pearl why the time was right to move.

# A Need for Christian Education

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters



**Mrs Pearl Linkens**  
Headteacher

## What has your teaching career looked like so far?

PL: I have taught for almost 30 years (with breaks to raise my children) in state primary schools, a range of Church of England and community schools. I have taught a number of year groups, been Head of Year and a mentor for PGCE students and newly qualified teachers. Most recently I have been Head of Year in a small village community school south of Reading.

## Why are you moving now?

PL: Partly the right time of life, with my children growing up and leaving home. But also, I have found the ability to be open about my faith in Jesus which has been more and more squeezed in recent years. The atmosphere in schools is becoming more closed to Christian faith and the new RSE (relationships and sex education), even at primary level, is often very difficult for a Christian to teach and embrace.

## Do you think parents are aware of what their children are being taught about RSE?

PL: Probably not. Although it is more overt at secondary level, even in primary schools, children are being taught a whole range of principles, values and behaviour which go against biblical teaching.

## What has attracted you about Trinity Christian School?

PL: Although it is very small (20 pupils) and lacking many of the resources bigger schools (whether state or private) would have, I love the opportunity to integrate my faith and teaching. It's a great blessing to have a school with a clear Christian foundation, where the whole curriculum is designed around a biblical worldview. It's normal for the children to pray and to talk about Jesus. It's also a privilege to be able to address any behaviour issues from the heart, not just about actions, so we can talk about equality based on being created in God's image, or forgiving others because the Lord offers us forgiveness.

To read more about Trinity Christian School, visit [www.trinitychristianschool.org.uk](http://www.trinitychristianschool.org.uk)

*Interview conducted by Neil Jeffers, Trinity Christian School governor*



# The Evolving Needs of Governing Bodies

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**Jonathan Payne**  
Consultant, Carnelian Search



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Christian charities are seeing increased scrutiny on leadership. Together with a highly competitive landscape within education generally, the demands on governing bodies are greater than ever.

As such, no longer is it enough for a board of governors to represent a general mix of senior leaders. Instead, a carefully audited blend of expertise and experience is sought across the board enabling it to speak with wisdom and insight into the full range of questions facing independent schools. After a living and active faith in Christ, we're seeing the following demands from schools looking to build a pipeline of candidates to join their board:

- Digital and IT: expertise in digital transformation is highly sought after by boards across the charity sector, and independent schools are no different. Whether it surrounds questions of data security, marketing or digital learning tools and systems, strategic knowledge of technology and its applications in an educational context is increasingly valuable.
- Entrepreneurialism: given the competitive landscape within education generally, business leaders can provide vital creative thinking in growing the reach and provision of schools, as well as a more general commercial and organisational acumen which can be useful in the more practical, detailed areas of school governance.

- State-school leadership: both for the purposes of partnerships with state-schools and understanding the competition they provide, a detailed working knowledge of state-funded education can be a real boost to boards. This is particularly relevant given that schools with a Christian ethos are growing in their appeal to families who wouldn't otherwise consider private education given the rapidly growing hostility to Christian ethics in state-run contexts.
- Legal expertise: this is a standard requirement for almost any board. However, with independent schools' charitable status being increasingly contested, an understanding of the possible challenges posed by potential law changes could prove key to the longer-term health of independent schools.

Layered over these requirements is a need for diversity in different dimensions. A board which represents a range of ages, cultural backgrounds, ethnicities and sexes will not only represent the breadth of the body of Christ across the UK as well as the makeup of student and parent bodies but enhance the cognitive diversity which is crucial to effective governance and leadership generally.

Carnelian Search specialises in trustee and governor recruitment for Christian organisations. Please get in touch if you think we could help your school.

# Book Reviews for adults

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters

## *Making Faith Magnetic: Five Hidden Themes Our Culture Can't Stop Talking About...and How to Connect Them to Christ* by Daniel Strange



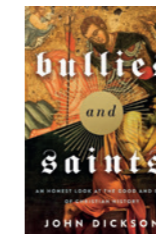
A really helpful book for sharpening your talks or conversations about Christ. Daniel Strange examines five themes or 'magnetic points' that our culture is drawn to and shows how those are ultimately fulfilled by the good news of the gospel. An easy, engaging read which can inspire us to listen carefully to the culture we're in and respond lovingly with the news of the Lord Jesus.

## *A Year in the Life: Adventures in British Subcultures* by Lucy Leonelli



Leonelli says that she was 'overwhelmed by a sense of [her] own morality' and so gave up her high-flying job to spend a year immersed in various communities and interest groups in the UK. It might not win awards for its literary style, but this book is a brilliant depiction of the quest to belong, the importance of community and the diversity of human experience. Read as a Christian, it's also a fascinating insight into how daunting it can be for someone to engage with an unfamiliar culture (like Christianity) and how to help newcomers feel at home.

## *Bullies and Saints* by John Dickson Reviewed by Frankie Knight, TISCA trustee and Chair of the General Purposes Committee



It's a common accusation that Christianity has been responsible for some of the worst atrocities in history. Is that true? How should we navigate the mixed and complicated history of Christianity. Dickson takes a robust look at Christian history, the good, the bad and the ugly, and helps both Christians and non-Christians to know the facts behind events like The Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition and the Northern Irish Troubles to name just a few, and to appreciate the beauty of the gospel in spite of them. Well worth a read.

## *No One is Talking About This* by Patricia Lockwood



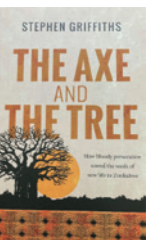
Shortlisted for the 2021 Booker Prize, this little book packs a punch. Written in the style of someone immersed in social media and living their life through memes and Tweets, this is a story about trying to cope when real life goes wrong. An adult book which might make your eyes water, either out of sadness or shock, but a powerful insight into modern life and the search for meaning, security and hope beyond a phone screen....

## *What if? Dealing with Doubts* by Kristen Young



Stop the press, this is an excellent book. Young takes a rigorous look at doubts teenagers can have and the big questions they might ask about the Christian faith. She not only provides a helpful analysis of doubt itself but also in-depth answers to some tough questions. This book is simple without being simplistic, generous to different Christian approaches, realistic and well-structured and a great resource to have on your bookshelf.

## *The Axe and the Tree* by Stephen Griffiths



Reviewed by Alastair Reid (TISCA gen sec)

I have to say that when I read an endorsement which says, 'I couldn't put it down', I am usually very sceptical. However, I do have to say, 'I could hardly put it down!' (I only say 'hardly' because I generally read in bed before going to sleep and at 360 pages I couldn't quite complete it in one sitting!) This is an incredibly powerful account, written almost like a Christian adventure story, about a missionary family's service in war-torn Rhodesia / Zimbabwe. It's a true story of deep faith, incredible bravery, heart-rending suffering and yet also life-changing forgiveness which continues to resonate today. It will also appeal to those involved in teaching and / or in nursing as much of the story revolves around a school and also a hospital. Don't hesitate to spend £9.99 on buying it!

# Treverton Preparatory School and College

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**Lisa Ackerman**  
Head of Marketing

Treverton Preparatory School and College is situated in the picturesque KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, South Africa, on a 270-hectare campus. We are a co-educational day scholar and boarding school, for children from Grade 000 through to Grade 12.

At Treverton, we recognise that all people are created uniquely different, each for their purpose. We nurture the Individual through the Biblical Values that we find in the Word of God—appreciating each one's inherent strengths and weaknesses, lending strength and encouragement relationally and academically.

Treverton staff are committed to the care and growth of our students, addressing not only academic matters but heart matters too. Care and compassion are at the forefront of the staff's approach to teaching. Small mentor groups meet regularly, where teaching staff approach complex topics with students, bringing light to the subject matter.

Treverton is founded on a strong Christian Ethos. Staff members are hired accordingly, each one committed to upholding these Biblical Values. Disciplinary matters are centred around the values of redemption, repentance and forgiveness. Families are encouraged to walk alongside our staff as the care for

the student's future is of utmost importance.

Our 270-hectare Countryside Campus is home to a unique biodiversity, including some game species, and a hub of adventure. Outdoor Adventure is geared towards teaching risk, leadership and releasing a student into a lifestyle of adventure. Some of the disciplines taught are kayaking, orienteering, mountain biking, hiking, and survival skills.

The fast pace of the changing world is not unmet at Treverton. Particular focus is given to equipping students with skills in food source sustainability with the use of permaculture, skills in technology with coding and robotics and skills in lateral thinking with project-based learning in particular phases. Individuals will determine their future success by their ability to think critically, creatively and laterally.

Treverton welcomes international students with many coming from countries like Zambia, Botswana and Lesotho. We also host exchange students from all over the world and have an intern program, where students live on campus and help out with school life while they pursue careers after school.

In joining TISCA, we hope to network with other like-minded Christian schools, forming partnerships and relationships that will benefit our students and the global spread of the good news of Jesus Christ.



# Obituary Prof. Dr. John Shortt (1944–2022)

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters



**Paul Bate**

Head of the Park School in Yeovil, Somerset from 1993-2010. I was also the Principal of Emmanuel Christian school, Oxford in 2015 coming out of retirement to help them out

I first met John at a TISCA meeting over 20 years ago. We had three things in common. We had both taught Mathematics in secondary schools. We worshipped in Baptist churches and both of us had a passion for Christian Education.

I invited John to the school where I was Head and he conducted a memorable in-service day which was full of knowledge, wit and encouragement. John was a Cambridge graduate with a doctorate from London University. For many years he was the Director of Research at the Stapleford Centre where he led professional development courses for Christian teachers. He later became an adjunct Professor at Calvin University in the USA and also taught on-line courses for Regents University. He became a prominent leader and the travelling secretary of EurECA, the European Educators Christian Association. He travelled to a number of countries including Russia and the Ukraine.

He was the author of many books and articles including co-authoring with his friend David Smith "The Bible and the task of teaching" and "Bible shaped teaching". Until very recently he was a Professorial Fellow in Christian Education at Liverpool Hope University as well as being a regular preacher in his local Baptist church.

John was at the forefront of many Christian initiatives in education including the Charis Project which was a distinctly Christian approach to teaching. He also edited "Spectrum" which later became the "Journal of Education and Christian Belief".



He made a significant difference to my own understanding of Christian education and teaching. He also influenced thousands of other teachers across the world. One of his favourite themes was Shalom. It's often understood to mean peace but it's also used to greet people and to bid them farewell. John has said farewell to this world and is now with his Lord. He will be greatly missed with his wisdom, mentoring and advice by many and we give glory and praise to God for his life.



# TISCA Trustees

## Fun facts about our new Trustees!

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



### Lizzy Nesbitt

**Fun fact:** My ambition when I was 18 was to be the first female commentator on Test Match Special

**School interest / links / involvement:**

I'm the Principal of Emmanuel Christian School, Oxford

**Profession:** ditto

**Favourite drink:** I drink a lot of Earl Grey, Lady Grey and Smoky Earl Grey tea.

**Favourite colour:** Red

**Your key concern for schools / pupils / parents today:**

That schools would be places where what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable excellent and praiseworthy, is valued and promoted.



### Alice Monahan

**Fun fact:** When I was training to be an Architect I worked around the corner from the Flat Iron Building in New York City.

**School Interest and Profession:** School Chaplain, Westonbirt School

**Favourite drink:** Tea.

**Favourite colour:** Impossible to choose, blue, green, red, pink, probably all of them

**Key concern:** Willingness to be confused



### Sue Clark

**Fun fact:** I enjoy movies but not the fighting scenes so I was spotted having a nap in the cinema during a showing of Die Hard 4!

**School Interest:** Former parent and present grandparent with a daughter in law teacher

**Profession:** Volunteer Treasurer and former solicitor

**Favourite drink:** I just love tea the more the better

**Favourite colour:** Not sure like all colours but maybe something bright and cheerful best

**Key concern:** Support for schools, governors, teachers, parents, pupils in these challenging times.



### Victor Selvaraj

**Fun fact:** Broke my bones – seven times – not a bone but overall seven times before 18 years.

**School Interest:** Teacher

**Profession:** Ditto

**Favourite drink:** Coffee – always...

**Favourite colour:** Blue and Maroon

**Key concern:** Both – parents and pupils have a lot of information to tackle with – hope the right information is given at the right time.



### Alex Aldous

**Fun fact:** I have no cartilage in my nose – boys used to think I was a boxer and I used not to deny the fact to keep them on their toes!

**School Interest:** Chaplain at four public schools and one Preparatory school over the last 28 years. Teacher for 11 years before that

**Profession:** School Chaplain

**Favourite drink:** Coffee in the morning, tea in the afternoon!

**Favourite colour:** Navy blue

**Key concern for schools:** That Christ's name be upheld